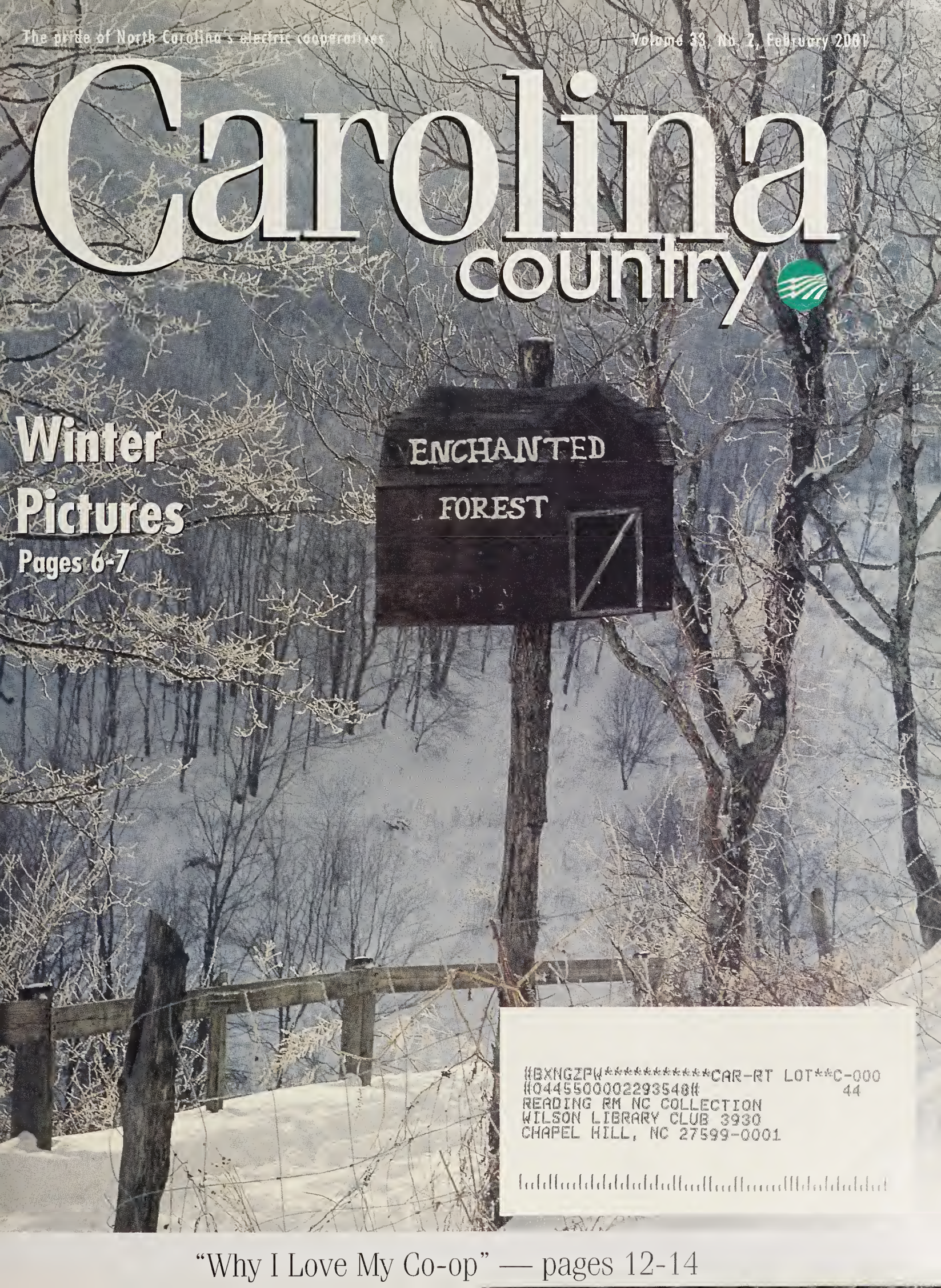
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 33, No. 2, February 2001

Carolina country



Winter Pictures

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"Why I Love My Co-op" — pages 12-14

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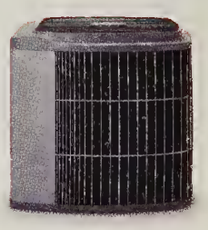

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A Surry County Tobacco Barn

By Gerald Yokely

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Just add lime

A few years back another man and I were invited to speak to a ladies church group on the subject of gardening. My friend was speaking first on the subject of vegetable gardening, while I waited to share my expertise in vine fruits, specifically thornless blackberries.

As my friend shared his message, the subject soon turned to soils, then to fertilizers, and then to the keeping of a compost pile. After hearing what the common ingredients were that are usually added to a rich compost heap, one of the ladies in the group raised her hand to signal that she had a question.

"Won't that make a horrible smell in the back yard?" she inquired.

"Oh, yes it can," replied my friend and he continued. "All you need to do is add some lime to it once in a while and it will control the odor."

"I see," replied the inquisitive lady. "But how do you know whether to squeeze them or slice them first?"

R. Alan Robinson
Morehead City
Carteret-Craven Electric member

Bobby O'Neal, the transformer and New Year's Eve

There's no grass growing under Bobby O'Neal's feet. My wife and I chose to spend Christmas and New Year's at our beach house on Ocracoke. Just about sunset on a cold New Year's Eve, the transformer outside our home literally blew its lid. Before I could walk over to his house to tell him about it, Bobby had left to get his truck, his helper and a new transformer. Power was restored in 80 minutes!

Con Edison moves reasonably fast in an emergency, but this was more like a tire change at an Indy 500 pit stop.

We thank both Tideland EMC and Bobby for a warm winter's night. However, I now think we've been spoiled.

Robert W. Newmann
New York, NY

What kind of cookies?

My oldest daughter, Blythe, has been married for six years now, but she just has not seemed interested in the fine art of baking, until this year. While visiting me one day she asked if I had any cookie recipes she might try out. Surprised to hear she had sparked an interest in cooking, I gladly gave her several cookie recipes.

The next time my 5-year-old granddaughter, McKenna, came over, I asked her which cookies mommy decided to bake. With a weird look on her face, she said, "I don't know what kind they were, but they were yellow on the outside and black on the bottom."

Jean Edwards
Saluda

A teenager's response

I'm writing in response to the "Advice to the President" written by Glenn Wiggens in your January issue.

To give a teenager's opinion to this, I feel that children and teens are not influenced by television. I feel that we are influenced by the news, what goes on everyday in the world. If kids see that somebody can go out and do something wrong, then get turned back out on the street with barely a slap on the hand, of course they're going to think they can do the same.

However, I do agree with the idea that the nation should believe in an eye for an eye. Perhaps Mr. Bush is listening.

Hayley Allred Cole
Connelly Springs
Rutherford EMC

In McDowell County Looking West

By Renae Ledford, Bakersville, Rutherford EMC

Family traditions hit home

I loved your traditions' stories in the December 2000 issue. Several caught my eye:

"Barber Dad" reminded me of when our three sons were young. Their dad also cut their hair, and the same look appeared on their faces as was shown by Henry Kornegay's picture. I think it was a special time of bonding for the males of the household.

"The Three Gift Rule" is a marvelous idea. For next year, I plan to discuss this with our growing family, which now includes daughters-in-law and three grandsons, when we all get together for Christmas this year.

Winter in Davidson County

By *Peggy Beane*, Denton, EnergyUnited

"Fried Oysters" reminded me of my growing up years. Dad loved oysters any way: fried, raw, in stew, in a casserole. He always made oyster stew on Christmas morning, which replaced our usual bacon and eggs. At the time, I couldn't stand it, but eventually could tolerate the "stew" part. After I married, much to my surprise, I served it, too, but for Christmas Eve supper. Ironically, though, when we were together for the holidays, after my boys came along, Dad fixed them bacon and eggs!

"The Christening gown" idea is one I'll mention to the parents of our newest grandson, who will be baptized in February 2001.

Thanks for the wonderful stories.

Tiffany T. Klappenbach
Mount Gilead

Guilty of not eating collards

After reading the nice article by Carla Burgess on "Field of Greens – Cold Weather Collards" [December 2000], I almost feel guilty that I haven't tried collards since childhood. I am now 82 years old and was raised in Pitt, Wilson and Bertie counties with a family of collard lovers. My father, from Bertie County, worked for the Greenville utility commission and the Wilson utility division back in 1928-36. Eggs were one cent each, a loaf of bread 10 cents and collards were free for the asking. Everyone who had a garden had a collard patch and most still do. My wife, from Hertford County, loves collards, and I plan to try some again the next time she cooks a mess.

Like your other readers, we take lots of magazines but always look forward to every issue of Carolina Country. We live in Florida, but still visit North Carolina several times a year.

Jack C. Gurley
Melbourne, Fla.

How do you make parched popcorn?

Does anyone have a recipe for parched popcorn? I remember eating it when I was a little boy. The popcorn was cooked on an iron skillet on a woodstove. It was about half popped.

Jerry Daniel
2038 E. Lyon Station Rd.
Creedmoor, NC 27522

Useful

You have a great Web site. This was my first visit and I have found so many useful items.

We love your magazine, too. The mother of a 4-H'er and the leader of a 4-H Club, I am always looking for articles to pass along on electricity and such that will give the 4-H'ers project information. Please keep up the good work.

Judy Watson
Sanford

Why are they called "hoe cakes"?

When I was a little girl, my Grandma used to cook "hoe-cakes" for us. It was made by taking just flour and water mixed into a batter and fried in a pan, like a pancake. Now, I'm a grandma myself, and often fry one up for one of my grandchildren when they visit. I am wondering how this recipe came to get its name, "hoe-cake."

Connie Robinson
Hamlet

Editor's Note: The way we've heard it is that the "hoe cake" is a simple version of cornbread originally baked on the flat of a hoe over a wood fire.

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25			11.77	11.24	18.81	17.50	30.62	28.00
26			11.77	11.24	18.81	17.50	30.62	28.00
27			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
28			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
29			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
30			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
31			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
32			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
33			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
34			11.94	11.33	19.25	17.71	31.50	28.43
35			11.94	11.41	19.25	17.93	31.50	28.87
36			12.03	11.50	19.46	18.15	31.93	29.31
37			12.12	11.59	19.68	18.37	32.37	29.75
38			12.21	11.77	19.90	18.81	32.81	30.62
39			12.39	11.94	20.34	19.25	33.68	31.50
40			12.56	12.21	20.78	19.90	34.56	32.81
41			12.74	12.39	21.21	20.34	35.43	33.68
42			12.92	12.65	21.65	21.00	36.31	35.00
43			13.09	12.83	22.09	21.43	37.18	35.87
44			13.45	13.09	22.96	22.09	38.93	37.18
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49			16.72	14.95	31.06	26.68	55.12	46.37
50			17.60	15.39	33.25	27.78	59.50	48.56
51			18.48	15.83	35.43	28.87	63.87	50.75
52			19.37	16.27	37.62	29.96	68.25	52.93
53			20.34	16.89	40.03	31.50	73.06	56.00
54			21.40	17.51	42.65	33.03	78.31	59.06
55			22.81	18.31	46.15	35.00	85.31	63.00
56			24.23	19.10	49.65	36.96	92.31	66.93
57			25.73	19.99	53.37	39.15	99.75	71.31
58			27.50	21.05	57.75	41.78	108.50	76.56
59			29.71	22.28	63.21	44.84	119.43	82.68
60			32.62	23.79	70.43	48.56	133.87	90.12
61			36.25	25.47	79.40	52.71	151.81	98.43
62			40.31	27.23	89.46	57.09	171.93	107.18
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Coal, the environment, and the energy future

Affording alternative energy

This is in regards to the issue of deregulation of electricity. We have a summer home in Todd, N.C., and use the services of the Blue Ridge Electric. We have been satisfied with their service. I am concerned that deregulation will result in a situation similar to that now causing problems in California. It seems to me that the deregulation of some service industries — for example telephone, cable TV, and air travel — have not resulted in lower costs and improved service. In the case of telephone providers, the companies which were so critical of Southern Bell have become just like that company. Airline fares have increased, and service has not improved. These, however, are not "utilities" in our society as is electrical service.

It seems to me that if one wants an alternative one should investigate alternate sources of energy. Solar power is one example of such an alternative. The development of alternatives to supplement the established power supplier would provide choices without disrupting power as has happened in California. More information on deregulation issues is available at "Public Citizen", a watchdog group which has been documenting the effects of deregulation in America:
http://www.citizen.org/cmep/restructuring/utilityderegulation1.html

We in this country enjoy, for the most part, a quality of life that is envied around the world as efficient and accessible. Unfortunately, it does not come without cost, and as consumers we need to be very careful that in the rush to lower personal expenses we are not "pennywise and pound foolish."

Donna Heald
Tallahassee, Fla.

Say no to coal

I read with concern the article "Accepting Coal as the Nation's Primary Energy Source" [December 2000].

Not only is it generally understood that coal-fired power plants generate air that creates breathing problems for many people, reputable scientists are telling us that carbon emissions are a major cause of global warming.

We are bequeathing a disaster to our grandchildren because publications like yours and lobbyists for oil and coal keep the public from seeing that a shift to alternative energies and lifestyles is within our reach economically and technologically. As the richest nation in the world, we are plundering most of its fossil fuels and destroying its atmosphere with the greatest abandon.

You should be educating us about energy conservation, the availability of alternative energy and technologies, and the healthier lifestyles that will emerge as we adapt to the needed changes.

Evelyn Mattern
Rolesville

We can make the energy future bright for everyone

Carolina Country is proud to count among our readers many who understand and are deeply concerned about our natural surroundings and their cooperative's role in protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Because they have a voice in their cooperative's business, members can express their opinions on these and other matters and make a difference.

Here at the magazine, we really try to encourage people to pay attention to the wondrous world around us, to promote cultural and environmental preservation, and to consider both old and new ideas. We regularly report on ways that people, communities and cooperatives conserve energy and deliver new technologies, because we hope to help the electric cooperative community as a whole improve the welfare of our communities and the greater world.

In December, we published an article about coal as a fuel for generating electricity because we believe our readers could learn something about America's reliance on coal and the technological advancements that have cleared the air. If you take that article in context with everything else we publish, you'll see that we don't advocate coal to the exclusion of other fuels and technologies.

Electric cooperatives have a long history of promoting energy conservation, from low-energy lighting to energy audits that help consumers make their homes energy efficient. Many cooperatives offer low-interest loans for conservation-related expenditures. In this month's magazine (pages 24-25) we advise elderly and low-income members where they can go for energy conservation help.

Also, cooperatives in North Carolina and throughout the nation sponsor research into alternative energy resources. Of particular interest are the two promising technologies of fuel cells and micro-turbines. Co-ops also are investigating wind, solar and biomass power generation and have put them to use in limited situations. Unfortunately, however, solar and wind are not yet realistic replacements for the essential base-load power plants.

More than 51 percent of all electric energy in this country comes from coal-based facilities. Over 20 percent is generated by nuclear facilities, 15 percent from natural gas, 8.5 percent from hydro, 3 percent from petroleum and 2 percent from renewables including wood, wind, solar and biomass.

Coal is an essential part of a reliable fuel mix. That does not mean that we should not try to make the burning of coal for electric generation as clean as possible. The U.S. Department of Energy's clean coal initiative along with clean air legislation have resulted in dramatic environmental improvements. Within a decade, utilities nationwide will have reduced sulfur dioxide (SO_2) emissions by more than 50 percent compared to levels in the early 1970s. By 2010, thanks in large part to utility reductions, national SO_2 emissions will be at their lowest level in 100 years. Particulate emissions have declined more than 80 percent during the period of 1970 to 1997.

The only realistic replacement for coal-based generation of electricity today is gas-fired turbine generators. Gas as a fuel for generation of electricity is at least twice as expensive as coal. With recent price spikes due to a shortage of supply, gas is currently more than four times as expensive as coal.

Recent consumer protest in California indicates their impatience for substantially increased energy prices. Consumer-owned utilities like us have a responsibility to act in the best interests of all consumers. In a world of rising energy costs, those most affected are people with the least ability to pay. Low-income and fixed-income consumers must make hard choices when they can barely pay for heating or cooling their homes.

While reputable scientists disagree about the causes and effects of global warming, there is one area where there is little disagreement. The consequences of proposed remedies for global warming would create wrenching changes that would hurt mostly those with the least ability to help pay for them. Yet, in fact, we collectively are making those lifestyle changes, gradually and carefully and compassionately.

Electric cooperatives will continue to move toward an energy future that makes sense environmentally, socially and economically.

Michael E.C. Gery
Editor

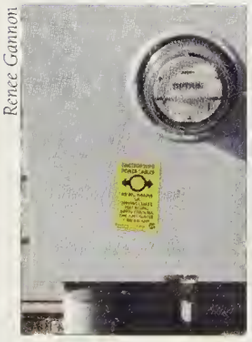
Meter tampering is illegal

North Carolina law specifically prohibits altering, tampering with and bypassing electric meters. Persons found guilty are liable for triple the amount of losses and damages to the utility, or $500, whichever is greater.

Anyone using power from an altered meter violates the same law. The person in whose name the meter is installed, and the persons using the electricity, may be liable.

It's also illegal for an unauthorized person to reconnect a meter after the utility has disconnected it.

It's also illegal to alter or remove a load management device that your utility has installed, unless you've asked the utility in writing to remove it and the utility has not removed it within two working days.


Renee Gannon

This law also applies to gas and water meters.

These activities do not apply to licensed contractors performing their usual services within recognized standards.

It's all in North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 14, Subchapter VI, Article 22, Section 14-151.1

Roanoke Electric's CEO named to state Internet Access Commission

Roanoke Electric Cooperative CEO Curtis Wynn has been named to the state's Rural Internet Access Commission.

In December, Gov. Jim Hunt appointed five people to the commission, a 21-member panel created last summer to make recommendations on state efforts to bring high-speed, broadband Internet access to rural areas of the state.

Hunt's other appointments are: Ed Turlington of Raleigh, a lawyer who was Hunt's chief of staff during the governor's third term; Joe Foster of Durham, director of regulatory and governmental affairs for Verizon Communications; John Carringer of Murphy, manager of the Murphy Electric Power Board, a TVA power distributor; and L.S. Guy Jr. of Faison, a former Duplin County school superintendent who recently won a county commissioner's seat.

Curtis Wynn

In October, Hunt named UNC-Wilmington Chancellor James Leutze as chairman.

Dejec Hickman

The Pender Patriots won the 2nd annual Christmas Basketball Tournament held in Burgaw and sponsored by Four County Electric and Touchstone Energy®. The tall guy is Willie Wiredhand, the electric cooperative mascot.

Roger Jones has served his co-op for 50 years

"Well, it was in 1950," said Roger W. Jones. "W.C. Carlton had just recently been hired to manage Carteret-Craven Electric, and he and a couple of board members dropped by to ask me to serve on the board of directors. I was just starting a new business and really didn't feel like I had the time, but after a while they persuaded me and I've been on the board ever since."

"I remember my mother helping to sign up new members," he continued. "Back then, people weren't so sure about it, but it wasn't long before we started to grow."

And grow they did. Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative now serves over 32,000 members in four eastern North Carolina counties. "I think when I became a member of the board," Mr. Jones remembered, "we had around 2,000 members. I certainly don't take credit for that, but I'm definitely proud of where we are today."

Bill Ward

For 17 of the past 50 years, Roger Jones has been the co-op's board president, and he was re-elected to that seat last fall. Born and raised down the road from Carteret-Craven's headquarters, Mr. Jones has been involved in more than just the co-op. He runs his business, the R. W. Jones Fish Company, and was instrumental in founding the West Carteret Water Corporation. His two sons work with him, and his daughter and her husband live next door. He'll tell you very quickly about his six grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and of course, the love of his life, his wife, Lucy. Even though he's worked from Texas to Maine, Mr. Jones still calls Carteret County the greatest place to live and raise a family.

"It's been great, living here. I've hunted and fished and, of course, I have my family nearby." He also has the head of a 950-pound elk nearby, a trophy from a hunting trip out West.

Looking toward the future of the cooperatives, Roger Jones says, "It may be in the future that we won't even need power lines. Whatever method we use, you can be sure the cooperatives will be there on the ground floor with everything that comes about, and the thousand co-ops in the U.S. will finish it and bring about a greater country."

Why I Love My Co-op

Recent research on the national level says that electric cooperative members hold very high opinions of their utility. They feel closer to their co-op and trust it more than customers of other utilities.

Can you think of any other major utility in America that can claim such closeness with their customers?

It's no wonder that cooperatives try their best to deliver quality services at reasonable prices, and that they seriously involve themselves in their communities. It's just the nature of cooperatives to operate in the best interests of the members who own it.

We asked Carolina Country readers to tell us why they like their co-op. All the responses carried heartfelt expressions of praise, thanks, confidence and real affection. We're publishing a selection of them on these pages. You can see more on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com

Thanks to everyone who wrote to us. Next month we'll publish your stories of what happened on your first dates. (Deadline was Jan. 15). There's still time to send us your hard-to-believe true stories. For the other themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 14.

— Michael Gery

We are family

I like my electric co-op because they are family. I know they can be counted on to act quickly and efficiently in any situation.

In wind, ice, whatever kind of storm that comes, those faithful people are out working, risking their lives, often around the clock, to keep wheels turning, so that I can be safe and comfortable, without thought of their personal comfort. I'm sure they get plenty of complaints, fussed at and even cursed at, but they "take a licking and keep on ticking," so to speak.

Once during a big storm, the kind husband of a dear lady who worked in our Haywood EMC office brought his own generator and used it so our freezer would not thaw and cause its contents to spoil.

Yes, I am very thankful for our electric co-op, because we are part of the same family, and they make us feel as if we are.

Geraldine Fisher
Lake Toxaway
Haywood EMC

Good people work for my co-op

When I moved to Statesville in the 1980s with no money, I was a little fearful about coming to a town I knew little about. I had never purchased a home alone, but I put my faith to work and bought land and purchased a home in the country.

I called Crescent Electric and they came out and talked with me. In the 1980s it was called Crescent Electric instead of EnergyUnited. I had never met anyone nicer than these men who helped me with my electricity. I have had wonderful service, and I know that sound people work for this cooperative.

I have all the confidence in the world for EnergyUnited. I know they will be there for me when I need them.

Mary Charlene Hinson
Statesville
Energy United

They help us to help others

One of the things I like about Randolph Electric is their neat magazine. I always glean something from each issue as well as know what my electric co-op is doing to help its members have the best service available.

Now, Randolph EMC has started a program for its members to help others by rounding up our monthly bills to the nearest dollar. It will help those in need and with so little effort.

I think of our co-op every time I turn on a light switch or plug a cord into the electrical outlet and realize how lucky we are for such conveniences. My husband is a retired electrical engineer, and for many years worked in the "field," so he appreciates their hard work, too, through rain, snow, and sleet.

Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

Tiffany Traynham Klappenbach
Mount Gilead
Randolph EMC

True affection

Albemarle Electric Membership co-op literally fed, clothed and housed my mother, young brother and me when my father died at the age of 40 in January 1949. Mother was 37 and had worked in the public for just a year prior to her marriage in 1932. She went to work for AEMC, established in 1945. The EMC office was located upstairs over the bank building in Hertford. She worked all week, a half-day on Saturday and many nights with my brother or myself assisting her.

Gilbert Whitley, manager, and Dorris White were her co-workers. In fact, Mother named Dorris White at birth. Mrs. White retired in 1998 as AEMC's longtime manager. John Coston replaced Mr. Whitley in 1950, and Mother always said she could not have worked with finer

people. She despaired leaving AEMC when she married the Rev. Bennie Crawford in 1955 and moved to Lexington.

We have been AEMC members in Chowan County since April 1969, when my husband retired from the Coast Guard and we moved back home. I have a real affection for this co-op for reasons stated above, but also because of the good service provided these many years.

On Feb. 15, 1993, when I visited her, my mother, Ruby B. Crawford, talked about AEMC. She passed away that night, three hours after her husband died.

Marguerite Butler McCall
Edenton
Albemarle EMC

my Electric Co-op

My co-op has that old-time honesty and decency

In these days of selfish corporate, computer-minded, impersonal management, it's almost impossible to find a company with old-time handshake feelings and people who don't always worship the profit-line first and the customer last.

I'm glad to submit to all who will listen that the Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation meets the highest standards when it comes to both quality of service and just plain honesty and decency.

I have been a Rutherford customer for over 20 years and have always received the very best of everything up here in the mountains, where the challenge for reliable electric service is much greater than down on the flatlands. When Mother Nature roughs me up, it's always taken care of by dispatch from Rutherford. When the Southern Pine Beetle tree destruction moved in recently, Rutherford stepped in and gave us a hand to prevent possible power outages because of tree damage. And when we had to move a power line that gave us difficulty with our emergency helicopter landing pad, Rutherford arrived and solved that problem, too.

And so it goes. We think all the Rutherford Electric Membership people serve a great purpose in what they do to provide the energy required to meet our basic daily needs. Executive Vice President and General Manager Gary Whitener has a great team and deserves the highest commendation. President Joe Quinn and Vice President Dirk Burleson add a lot of strength to this team.

An old-time preacher told me that the purpose of living was simply to help your fellow man and advance the Kingdom. From what I have been able to observe, I think the Rutherford EMC people aspire to meet these modest standards.

R.B. Swanson
Marion
Rutherford EMC

They let us help them

I like my electric co-op because they let us help them. When the snow and ice comes and the power goes off, we get to call and tell them where the problem is.

The best of all is when we get to take them to the problem. We have a line back in the woods that you have to walk to. Sometimes, when the fuse or breaker jump out, we like to ride our four-wheelers around to help find the problem.

But most of all we know the people and what to expect. Our electric co-op is part of our family.

Samantha Furr
Locust
Union EMC

They reach out to serve me

Among the many reasons that I like and appreciate my electric co-op here in West Jefferson is because they have always provided excellent service to my household. They go the extra distance to provide all their customers with energy, efficient and affordable service, especially the ones such as myself who are on a limited income.

When a problem occurs they come and listen with interest and show you respect. They work very hard to get it corrected as soon as possible.

On a final note, I would like to add that recently when a local oil company turned me down, what a relief to know my electric co-op could once again be here for me. They have been working with Blue Ridge Energies LLC, formerly known as Ashe Oil, to provide even more great services to their customers.

Many thanks to my electric co-op and keep up the good work!

Anna M. Ray
West Jefferson
Blue Ridge Electric

A local utility that really cares

Our lives have become so complicated and fast-paced that we are losing our sense of family and community. We have gone from small towns and nuclear families to urban living and toward a global community. What a loss that is for future generations and us.

Our electric co-op is locally owned and we as members are the owners. We're like a family and a neighborhood – there to help each other. I like my co-op because it helps restore those precious times of unity and caring. Through Carolina Country magazine we share those sweet memories of a less complicated, simpler lifestyle.

Marie Lambert
Newport
Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

Reliability and relationship

If you had asked me four years ago when we bought our beach home at Emerald Isle what I anticipated liking about the electric co-op I was joining, I

would have answered "reliability." I expected dependable service and a steady supply of power. I wanted an electricity provider I could take for granted. I hoped I would like my electric co-op.

Ask me today what I like and my answer is "relationship." Who would have thought? A relationship with an electric co-op? My co-op is a group of people meeting mutual needs and reaching out to minister in the community, unlike a municipality or power company seeking solely after profits. My membership established the relationship, and the mailings and magazines have contributed toward a sense of community. The prompt, courteous responses from co-op service people have made the relationship real.

People helping people. Reliability and relationship.

Carol Dale
Emerald Isle
Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

They are polite and helpful

The question "Why I like my co-op" could promptly be followed by another question: "What's not to like?"

I live in the rural area of the county. Sometimes we get windstorms, snowstorms, sleet storms – you name it. We have been known to lose power from time to time. NEVER have I called Blue Ridge Electric when they were not gracious and polite. Once when my heat was off and my mother was here, they came and worked until 11:30 at night getting heat back on in her room.

Some of the men on the trimming crew are very young, but they are equally polite as the guys who have been coming for years. Somebody at Blue Ridge Electric has trained them well.

Our county appreciates the men in the field, as well as the people in the office, for the excellent job they do for us.

Ellen Brooks
Glade Valley
Blue Ridge Electric

They help us save money

Co-op membership means a great deal to my family and me. My mom has always had our household on a tight budget. In fact, both of my parents are very conservative and save every penny they possibly can. Our electric co-op helps our family save a great deal of money each month by providing low rates that otherwise, if owned by a "big" company, would be much greater.

Kyle Johnson
Wake Forest
Wake EMC

Send us your best. Earn $50.

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures.

April 2001
"Believe It or Not"
Tell us a true story that's hard to believe.
Deadline: Feb. 15

May 2001
"The View From Here"
What is the view from your window?
Deadline: March 15

June 2001
"Working in the Country"
What is the finest way to earn a living?
Deadline: April 15

July 2001
"The Finest Drive in North Carolina"
Where is it, what's there? Send pictures.
Deadline: May 15

August 2001
"The Finest Thing a Teacher Told Me"
Why did it make a difference?
Deadline: June 15

September 2001
"The Finest Photo in North Carolina"
Color or B&W. People, places.
Deadline: July 15

October 2001
"The Finest Restaurant in North Carolina"
Whose is it, and why is it so good?
Deadline: Aug. 15

November 2001
"The Best Thing That Ever Happened to North Carolina"
Long ago or recently.
Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2001
"The Finest Person in My Life"
Tell us why.
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
4. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
5. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. *(We will not return others.)*
6. We pay $50 for each submission published.
7. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions.
8. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web site: www.carolinacountry.com.

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School/Church Organization's Name_____ Phone (_____)_____

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(Adult Leader/Sponsor)

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2MCCM12

Honoring Veterans of Foreign Wars

Student essays look at freedom in America and war abroad

The Battleship North Carolina served the United States from 1941 to 1947, and has been a memorial to its veterans since October 1961. It is a floating museum open to the public. The Battleship is located at the junction of Highways 17/74/76/421 on the Cape Fear River across from historic downtown Wilmington. Open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Sept. 16-May 15) and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (May 16-Sept. 15). A self-guided tour takes about two hours and includes an orientation exhibit, parts of nine decks, a museum store, snack bar and riverside picnic area. Admission for the Battleship is $8 for age 12 and older; $4 children ages 6-11; seniors 65 and over and active military are $7; children ages 5 and under are free. For further information, call (910) 251-5797 or visit the Battleship Web site at www.battleshipnc.com.

The old saying that we must learn from our past or be doomed to repeat it rings quietly in the minds of more than 150 North Carolina students who participated last fall in the Battleship North Carolina essay contest "Love Your Country – Honor Veterans."

The purpose of the contest was to encourage students to understand what veterans have done to help preserve our freedom, to appreciate being an American, and to gain a respect for our men and women in service today. The students interviewed a military veteran and produced art, an essay or media presentation that reflects what they learned. The 150-plus entries came from across the state and included artwork, essays, Power Point presentations and videos.

The winners, their teachers and the veterans were honored at the Battleship's Veterans Day Ecumenical Service last November 11.

The three grand prize winners were from families served by electric cooperatives. They were John Franklin Smith of Salemburg, for grades K-3; Brittni M. Shambaugh of Sneads Ferry, for grades 4-8; and Elizabeth Ward Strickland of Tabor City, for grades 9-12.

Museum Services Director Kim Sincox said that last summer three teachers working on lesson plans at the battleship brainstormed with the ship's staff. They hoped the essay contest would help interest kids in history, as well as help their writing skills. The staff is already working on next year's essay contest.

Following are excerpts from the grand prize-winning essays.

Great-uncles in Korea

John Franklin Smith

By John Franklin Smith
3rd grade, Sampson County 4-H
Dixie Jordan, 4-H Associate

My great-uncle Payton was in a medical unit during the Korean War. He was an Army Medic. He was in the Army from 1953 until 1955. He was trained to use many different guns, but he did not have to fight because he was in a medical unit. He said Korea was very cold and you had to keep from getting frostbite. It sometimes got to be 23 degrees below zero.

He was usually near the artillery and they used big 8-inch guns. Sometimes they would fire the big guns 24 hours a day. He lost most of his hearing because of this and is a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans. In his off time while in the Army, he would sport box with the other soldiers. He was very good at boxing, but he said some of the other soldiers were bigger than he was so he did not do it very long. He said there were little boys that worked near his unit shining boots and keeping the huts clean. They worked for the soldiers because they would be paid very well for what work they could get. They did not work for the Army, but the soldiers.

He also said he always had buddies with him during the time he was in the Army. Some he even talks with today when they can get together. He was very grateful to get back to America when his time in the Army was over and he is very glad Sampson County, N.C., is no where near as cold as Korea.

My great-uncle John Fisher Hamilton was in both the Navy during World War II and the Army during Korea. He was also in the Coast Guard during Vietnam. In Korea, he was in charge of a platoon of half-tracks that shot 50-caliber machine guns. He died not too long

before I was born, but my Daddy told me about what he heard him say about Korea.

He told Daddy it was very cold, and the half-tracks did not have very good heaters in them. He also said when they were told to pull back to the 38th parallel, his platoon was ordered to protect the men that had to march. The Communist Army would attack at night, so they made a line of half-tracks across the road to keep the enemy from getting to the men on the ground. They would fire the guns all night at the enemy. The Communists would attack in waves of men. When the first attack was shot down, the next would hide behind them, get the guns from the dead soldiers and attack again. This would go on all night.

Erwin Stewart in Europe

Brittni M. Shambaugh

By Brittni M. Shambaugh
7th seventh grade, Dixon Middle School
Phyllis Williams, teacher

I know a real hero. His name is Mr. Erwin Stewart.

Mr. Stewart is an amazing man. He fought in World War II and was terribly wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, but he never applied for a Purple Heart.

Mr. Stewart has watched his friends fall, dead at his feet. He has gone days without food or rest. He has spent countless nights lying awake in his bed, recalling guns firing and people screaming.

Even now, so long after the war, Mr. Stewart has a hard time speaking of his experiences. At times when he was telling me his story, his voice would crack, or he would have to wipe the teardrops from his eyes.

Mr. Stewart told me of a time during the war when it became bitterly cold and his unit, and thousands of others, were cut off completely from the other Allied forces. The temperature was just below 5 degrees and they were surrounded by frozen snow at least 18 inches high. They could only sleep for 10 minutes, at the most, otherwise they would freeze to death. They were forced to eat snowballs for food.

After about four days of this misery, the sun came out and rations (or what they called "hash") were dropped to the ground in tin cans by small parachutes. With the enemy still firing it was difficult to get to the rations, but they had gone four days with no food. They took their chances to get some "hash." The cans were frozen solid. In order to eat the food inside, the men had to put the frozen tin cans to their bodies to warm it enough to open.

Mr. Stewart told me of a young Belgian girl who was working as a nurse for the injured soldiers. Mr. Stewart and the lady had become very good friends and he learned that she was engaged to an American soldier. The young girl had noticed that there were a lot of parachutes out in an open field, not far away from the school that was being used as the hospital. She decided that it might be nice to use the material from the parachutes for her wedding gown. She ran into the fields to retrieve the material. As the men watched her fetching the parachutes, a German sniper did the same. A single shot rang out and a faint scream could be heard. The young nurse dropped to the cold ground, no longer filled with the breath of life. No one would ever see her beautiful smile again, or hear her heartfelt laugh.

At this point in his storytelling, Mr. Stewart could hold in his emotions no longer. A single tear dripped down his cheek. He later told me that the school was bombed a few weeks later. All medical personnel and wounded were killed.

Mr. Stewart describes coming home on the USS Argentina. His eyes sparkled like diamonds as he recalled the most beautiful thing he had ever seen: the Statue of Liberty and a small boat coming up alongside the ship he was in, playing a welcome home song for the military men.

Mr. Stewart speaks of an unconditional love for his country, a country that welcomed him home with open arms, a country worth fighting for.

Willis Troupe at Sea

Elizabeth Ward Strickland

By Elizabeth Ward Strickland
11th grade, South Columbus High School
Sheryl Dameron, teacher

In the early morning hours in March 1944, a young man was frightened to near delirium on board his ship in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. This 20-year-old man watched as ships around him were hit by German aircraft. Then came silence, then absolute pandemonium aboard the ship. He remembers racing from the deck to find cover from enemy fire. Dazed and confused, looking for his lifejacket, he watched as nearby ships sank into the black abyss of the sea. Within minutes ships were vanishing beneath the rolling sea. The pure force of the event sucked them under so far that they would never surface. Willis Troupe had no idea what to expect next.

Then he watched in fear as men suddenly surfaced to thrashing, screaming and human misery. He prayed this was a dream and he would awake at any instant. There would be no escaping this nightmare. His ship was miraculously not hit and he was uninjured physically, but emotionally the scars would last a lifetime. He spent the next hours aiding in the efforts as he watched fellow sailors bobbing aimlessly. He listened to the panicked cries of the young sailors, and then to the ever-deafening silence as fewer and fewer survivors hung on. As other rescue ships arrived, the remaining men were plucked out of the water. Mr. Willis and his ship were safe — at least for now.

Mr. Willis only talked about his ordeal once to me, but it showed me in one giant example everything about why the United States of America is strong and wonderful. I realized after talking to him that it is now my responsibility to carry on the ability to make life better for all Americans just as he did — one person at a time doing small but significant acts for other people.

I've learned from him never to take the political process lightly. I've learned to actively participate and voice my opinion. I've learned that when my community needs a helping hand, like when the American Cancer Society's "Relay of Life" is held each year, that I get involved. I learned how good it feels to work at an American Heart Association's fund raising event to benefit research to fight against my grandfather's heart disease. I've learned that working with underprivileged children in Raleigh's "Heritage Park" makes a difference in a child's life.

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Sweet Potato Harvest

By David Emory

David Emory's new acrylic painting depicts an eastern North Carolina sweet potato harvest, wooden crates and a soybean field. A North Carolina native born in 1961, David is a musician who opened a screen printing business before teaching himself to paint.

"Sweet Potato Harvest" is available as a print (image size 15 by 22 inches, paper size 20 by 26 inches). Signed and numbered prints cost $80, artist's proofs are $110, and artist's remark proofs are $140.

Contact Printworks, 650 Hwy. 258N, Snow Hill, NC 28580. Phone: (800) 646-1044 or (252) 747-2062.

Welcome to The Carolina Country Store

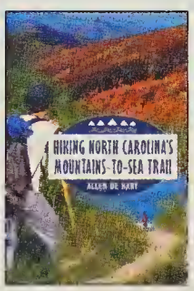
We've begun stocking the shelves of the new Carolina Country Store. It's our way of showcasing and supporting the growing economy of the North Carolina countryside.

We are open 24 hours a day, every day, at www.carolinacountry.com. Next time you're in the Web neighborhood, stop in at The Carolina Country Store. These pages show a sampling of what's in stock.

Send your comments or suggestions to our storekeeper Elisa Cottrell through the Web site or at Carolina.country@ncemcs.com.

Hiking North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail

North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail covers nearly 1,000 miles, and stretches from Clingman's Dome, the highest peak in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Jockey's Ridge, the largest sand dune on the Atlantic Coast. On the way, the trail winds through three national parks, three national forests, seven state parks, two wilderness areas, and two wildlife refuges. As the only comprehensive guide to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Allen de Hart's book, "Hiking North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail," allows hikers to hit the trail with confidence. Organized around 38 trail sections, each with detailed level of difficulty, descriptions and maps, de Hart covers terrain, scenery, plant and animal life, and historic sites, while logistics like parking, provisions, camping, lodging, regulations, and health and safety tips are also provided. His "campside stories," included in each section, are fascinating accounts of local history and lore. The 384-page book is available in paperback at bookstores for $18.95. For more information, visit The University of North Carolina Press at http://uncpress.unc.edu/ or write to PO Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2288.



A Naturalist's Guide to the Southern Blue Ridge Front

This new field guide for hikers, climbers, naturalists, botanists, zoologists, wildflower enthusiasts, waterfall watchers and anyone else who loves exploring the outdoors offers detailed descriptions of more than 50 natural areas in the "gorge" region of the Blue Ridge area. Veteran naturalist L.L. Gaddy shares his extensive knowledge of this scenic, biologically diverse region, which runs from North Carolina's Linville Gorge to Tallulah Gorge in Georgia. The 216-page book, "A Naturalist's Guide to the Southern Blue Ridge Front," is available in paperback at bookstores. Contact the University of South Carolina Press at 937 Assembly Street, Carolina Plaza, 8th Floor, Columbia, South Carolina 29208 or call (803) 777-2217 for more information.

New volume of Moravian records now available

The Moravians have left their indelible stamp of culture on our state. A new volume of edited church diaries kept by Moravian ministers provides insight into life in their communities during the mid-19th century. Volume 12, 1856-1866, of "Records of the Moravians in North Carolina," edited by C. Daniel Crews and Lisa D. Bailey, covers the turbulent period of the Civil War. Published by the N.C. Division of Archives and History, the new volume contains material about political and social history of the period, as well as information on the life and work of the Moravians. This 555-page clothbound book costs $40 plus $3.50 for shipping. North Carolina residents please include 6 percent sales tax. To order the book, write: Historical Publications Section (N), Division of Archives and History, 4622 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4622. For credit card orders or for a catalog of other historical publications, call (919) 733-7442.

Artifacts from the "Queen Anne's Revenge" on exhibit at N.C. Maritime Museum

One of the most often asked questions at the N.C. Maritime Museum these days is where are the "things" from the pirate ship? Since the discovery of "Queen Anne's Revenge," Blackbeard's flagship, just off Beaufort Inlet, visitors of all ages want to know more about the infamous pirate and his short-lived but terrifying career. Clues to Blackbeard's life and times have been gathered at the site of the wreck. Artifacts on exhibit in the museum include a bell dated 1709, a blunderbuss barrel, a sounding lead (used to determine the water depth), a cannon apron (covers a cannon touch hole to keep moisture from ruining the gun powder), a 9 ½-inch pewter plate, and cannon balls. These items are a part of a traveling exhibit that will remain at the N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort until May of 2001. The N.C. Maritime Museum is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Contact the museum at (252) 728-7317. The N.C. Maritime Museum Web site is www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/maritime and the Web site for information on Blackbeard and "Queen Anne's Revenge" is www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/qar/.

Porch talk

Guide to Health Services for Seniors

Seniors today find themselves facing a myriad of options about their own health care, including choices about long-term health insurance, Medicaid, home health care, assisted living and nursing homes. "Consumer Reports Complete Guide to Health Services for Seniors," written by Trudy Lieberman and the editors of "Consumer Reports," offers hands-on, practical advice in a user-friendly format that includes worksheets, charts and comparative tables. Each major chapter ends with "Key Decision Points" so seniors have a useful checklist to make important long-term health care decisions. Two new tools, released for the first time, are included in the book: the Nursing Home State Detection Index and the Nursing Home Watch List by State. These tools reflect information gathered by state inspectors who survey all care facilities and cite problematic ones all over the country. The book is published by Three Rivers Press and is available for $19.95 anywhere books are sold or by calling (800) 500-9760. You can also check it out online at www.ConsumerReports.org.

Help protect the dolphins

The state legislature recently approved a bill authorizing the Friends of the North Carolina Maritime Museum to receive revenue from a new custom license plate. Featured on the left side of the plate will be a picture of two dolphins jumping with the words, "Protect Wild Dolphins" circling the picture. Once 300 applications have been submitted, the plates will be distributed in approximately nine months. The plates will cost $30 in addition to the regular registration fee, and an additional $20 to personalize the plate. If you would like an application, write to the museum at 315 Front Street, Beaufort, NC 28516 or call (252) 728-7317.

The Fine Arts of Being Southern: A Symposium

The first Southern Arts Symposium of its kind will be held March 29 through April 3, 2001 at Wingate University. The symposium will feature 10 professional writers, drama, art, music, film, folklore, dance and a cooking contest. Among those performing or speaking will be Doc Watson, William Mangum, and Clyde Edgerton. Josephine Humphreys will discuss her newest novel, "Nowhere Else on Earth," a love story centering on the Lumbee community in Robeson County in the era of the Civil War. Monday evening will feature a special presentation by journalist Bill Maxwell and writer Beverly Coyle. "Parallel Lives," explores growing up in racially segregated 1950s Florida. Together they present their views of growing up, Coyle as a young white woman, and Maxwell as a young black man. For more information contact Sylvia Little-Sweat at slsweat@wingate.edu or (704) 233-8086, or Beverly Christopher at bevchris@wingate.edu or (704) 233-8081.

The dialect of O'cockers

The characteristic "brogue" of Ocracoke has long been famous beyond our state's boundaries. The N.C. Language and Life Program has spent more than four years recording interviews with more than 70 Ocracokers, ranging in age from 10 to 91. "Ocracoke Speaks: The Distinct Sounds of the 'Hoi Toide'" is a compilation of these interviews and the O'Cocker stories and tall tales told on the island. For video and audio excerpts, visit www.ncsu.edu/chass/english/linguistics/ocracoke.htm. To order the CD ($15) or the tape ($10), email ops@ocracoke-museum.org, write the Ocracoke Preservation Society, PO Box 491, Ocracoke, NC 27690-0491, or call (252) 928-7375.

The Seasonal Palette

Featuring over 150 carefully tested recipes, "The Seasonal Palette" combines the culinary arts of "Taste Full" magazine with the paintings of artist Bob Timberlake. This unique cookbook is now available at The Bob Timberlake Gallery. The cookbook costs $36.95 plus $5 for shipping and handling. NC residents add 6 percent sales tax. Call (800) 244-0095 or visit www.bobtimberlake.com.

Wildlife in North Carolina

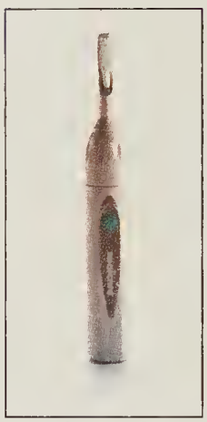
The magazine Wildlife in North Carolina is published monthly by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. In addition to news about the work of the commission, the full-color magazine devotes its pages to illustrated reports on animals, habitats, ecosytems, recreation, science and services related to North Carolina's outdoors. There's also regular features for young readers. The magazine promotes the N.C. Wild Store, which carries such items as wildlife posters, books, videos, caps and shirts. Subscriptions cost $7.50 per year (three years for $20). Contact Wildlife in North Carolina, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC 27604-1188. Phone: (888) 248-6834. Web site: www.ncwildlife.org

A buyers guide by Sharon O'Malley

Power brushing

Scrubbing your teeth with an ordinary toothbrush scrapes away surface dirt and plaque. But the fast-and-furious pace of an electric toothbrush swipes away twice as much -- and can whiten your teeth in the process. Today's models come with scores of attachments for a fresh mouth and clean teeth.

Beyond bristles. A combination of high-speed brushing – 31,000 brush strokes per minute to be exact – and sonic wave action penetrates beyond the bristles of Sonicare's toothbrush by up to 3 millimeters. That means hidden plaque is removed from places that the bristles can't reach. And the process removes more than 80 percent of coffee, tea and tobacco stains, so users get whiter teeth as well, the manufacturer says. Prices range from $90 to $120, depending on attachments. You'll find the toothbrush at drug and discount stores or you can order over the phone by calling (800) 682-7664.



Mouthpiece. No need to clutter your countertop with a cord or battery charger just because you want to use an electric toothbrush. To charge up Interplak's Odyssey model, plug it right into the wall for 10 minutes, remove the cord and brush away. Or, leave it plugged in for three hours, and it's good for a week. And the unit works in outlets internationally, so travelers can tote it on trips. It costs around $50 at major department stores or by calling (800) 633-6363.

Take it away. Don't want to stray from your dental health routine while you're on vacation? Pick up the BioCare Travel toothbrush by Krups, a lightweight, compact electric toothbrush and plaque remover. It comes with a hard plastic travel case, two brush heads and an extra battery. Replacement batteries eliminate the need for a travel charger. The model costs around $50 at department stores. Can't find one? Call (800) 526-5377.

Tell the truth. About 44 percent of Americans tell their dentists they floss their teeth every day. But dentists say the teeth themselves reveal another story: that just about 13 percent of those patients are telling the truth. Quit fibbing. Throw out your floss and invest in an electric flosser. Waterpik's model is clinically proven to be as effective as manual flossing. It comes with colorful hygienic sleeves so two people can share. You'll find it at discount and drug stores for around $35. Call (800) 525-2774.

Three in one. Your teeth will get a deep cleaning with the Braun Oral-B 3D Plaque Remover, which combines high-frequency, to-and-fro pulsations to loosen plaque with ultra-speed oscillations to gently sweep it away. Its bristles give way to pressure so they cup teeth and reach deep, but automatically sense if the pressure is too intense. A memory timer stutters after the recommended two minutes of brushing. The unit costs around $90 at drug and department stores. Call (800) 44-ORAL-B.

Time machine. If you can get your kids to brush at all, chances are they don't brush long enough. Bribe them with Oralgiene's 60-Second Time Machine, a colorful, see-through electric toothbrush whose angled brush heads rotate for a minute before stopping. It's available for about $39 at discount, drug and department stores. Call (800) 933-ORAL.

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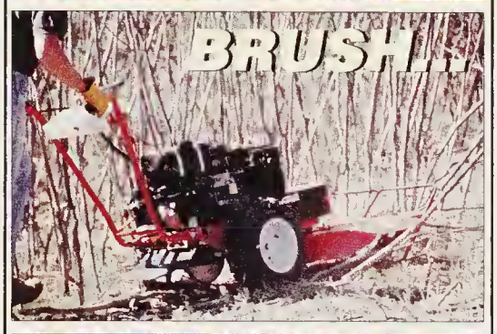

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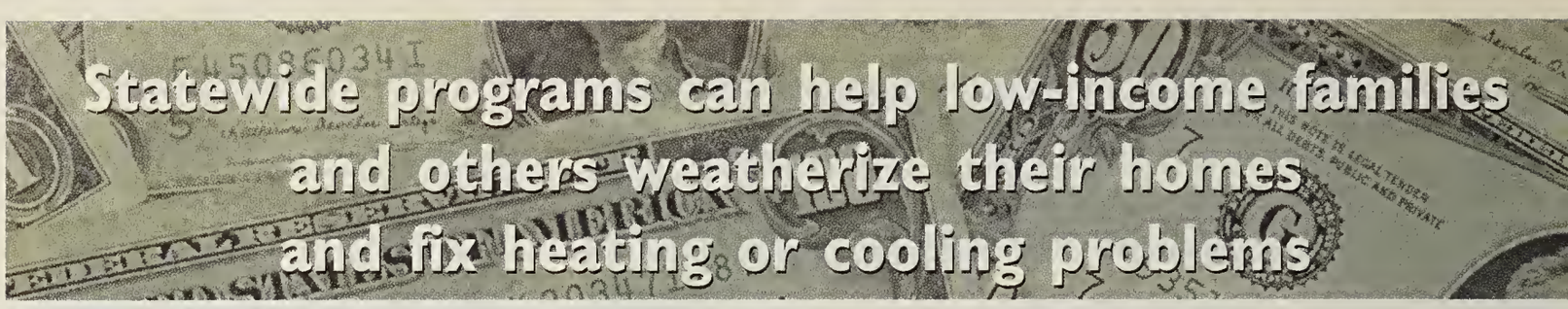

Statewide programs can help low-income families and others weatherize their homes and fix heating or cooling problems

Help is available for low-income families, elderly people and disabled people who need to fix their heating system or shield their home against cold weather. The purpose of these programs is to ensure that citizens' homes are as safe and energy-efficient as possible.

Local agencies across North Carolina offer these services through North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services.

Typically these programs are available to people who own or rent a residence or housing complex. If you are renting, you will need your landlord's permission.

Preference is given to persons over age 60, persons with disabilities, and, in some cases, children. If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), you are automatically eligible. You may also be eligible for assistance if your income falls within federally established income guidelines. According to the U.S. Dept. of Energy in January, those guidelines are as follows: yearly income of under $11,835 for a single person, between $13,263 and $15,915 for a two-person family, between $16,663 and $19,995 for a three-person family, between $20,063 and $24,075 for a four-person family, etc.

There are two programs: the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the Heating Air and Repair and Replacement Program (HARRP).

Following is a brief description of the programs and a list of the local agencies. If the agency in your area does not implement the program, it will refer you to a nearby agency that can help. This information was supplied by the state Office of Economic Opportunity.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

The program is implemented by 29 local agencies in the state.

Funding has come from federal government since 1976 and more recently from certain oil companies, as well, under a federally-monitored program. Local agencies determine client eligibility. Agency staff conduct an energy audit and testing of the home. Staff and private contractors complete the work. Record-keeping and inspections are required.

Weatherization projects may include:

- Insulating the attic, floors, water heater and exposed pipes
- Tuning up, repairing, and replacing the heating and air-conditioning unit
- Providing ventilation fans
- Stopping air infiltration
- Providing instructions on how to save energy

Heating Air and Repair and Replacement Program (HARRP)

The program is implemented at the local level via 29 regional agencies.

Funding comes from the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP. Funds are distributed to agencies based on the percentage of poverty in each county, as well as efficiency, meeting production goals, and quality work. Local agencies determine client eligibility.

Agency staff conduct an energy audit and diagnostic testing of the premises. Each eligible heating or cooling system is evaluated, cleaned and tuned and, in some cases, replaced. Staff and private contractors complete the work. Record-keeping and inspections are required.

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February

Grandfather Mountain

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

MOUNTAINS
(west of I-77)

Law Enforcement Appreciation Days
Feb. 8-9, Maggie Valley
Cataloochee Ski Area,
(800) 768-0285

Coffee House Talent Night
Feb. 10, Jefferson
Music, story-telling, Jefferson United Methodist Church,
(336) 246-ARTS

La Bottine Souriante
Feb. 17, Wilkesboro
Mix of jazz, folk, salsa, and French-Canadian music,
Walker Center,
(336) 838-6260

"Young at Art"
Feb. 23–March 30, West Jefferson
Exhibit of art from local children ages 5-18, Ashe Arts Center, (336) 246-ARTS

Appalachian State University Steely Pan Drum Band
Feb. 24, Jefferson
Ashe County High School,
(336) 246-ARTS

"Millennium II"
Through Feb 25, West Jefferson
Exhibit at Ashe Arts Center,
(336) 246-ARTS

Yadkin Valley Farm Toy Show and Auction
March 2-3,
Jonesville Holiday Inn
(Jct. I-77 & Hwy 67),
(336) 468-2575

Spring Frolic Beach Party
March 3-4, Maggie Valley
Cataloochee Ski Area,
(800) 768-0285

Farmer's Market

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

PIEDMONT
(between I-77 and I-95)

"The Princess and the Pea"
Feb. 6, Mocksville
Brock Performing Arts Center,
(336) 751-3000,
www.ncneighbors.com/1412/

Moon & Planet Observation
Feb. 6,
Chapel Hill Morehead Planetarium,
(919) 962-1236

Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School
Feb. 9, Oxford
Ramada Inn (Jct. I-85 & NC 96), (919) 603-1350

"A Wedding at Knox Inn"
Feb. 9-10, Wadesboro
Dinner Theatre, First United Methodist Church,
(704) 694-5211

La Bottine Souriante
Feb. 10, Winston-Salem
Mix of jazz, folk, salsa, and French-Canadian music, The Stevens Center,
(336) 721-1945

Afternoon in the Tropics
Feb. 10, Raleigh
Exhibit with real tropical animals, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, (919) 733-7450,
www.naturalsciences.org

Sweethearts: Country Courtship Customs of Long Ago
Feb. 11, Pinnacle
Horne Creek Living Historical Farm, (336) 325-2298

Cab Calloway's Legacy of Swing
Feb. 12, Winston-Salem
The Stevens Center,
(336) 721-1945

Old Time Square Dance
Feb. 16, Denton
Denton Civic Center,
(336) 475-9397

The Osborne Brothers
Feb. 17, Mount Airy
Live bluegrass music,
Downtown Cinema Theatre,
(800) 286-6193

Extreme Deep: Mission to the Abyss

Feb. 17–May 6, Raleigh
Oceanic exhibit, NC Museum of Natural Sciences,
(919) 733-7450,
www.naturalsciences.org

North Carolina Symphony
Feb. 17, Chapel Hill
Memorial Hall UNC,
(919) 733-2750

President's Day Program
Feb. 19, Pineville
James K. Polk Memorial,
(704) 889-7145

Blue Collar Tour featuring Jeff Foxworthy and Bill Engvall
Feb. 22, Greensboro
Comedy Show, Crown Coliseum, (910) 323-5088,
www.ticketmaster.com

Black History Month Celebration
February 23, Mount Airy
Live gospel concert, Andy Griffith Playhouse,
(800) 286-6193

Bill Cosby
Feb. 23, Greensboro
Comedian, Crown Coliseum,
(910) 323-5088,
www.ticketmaster.com

NASCAR Busch Series, ALLTELL 200
Feb. 24, Rockingham
Winston Cup Series stock car racing, NC Speedway,
(910) 582-2861

NC Motorsports

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

Dura-Lube 400 NASCAR
Feb. 25, Rockingham
Winston Cup Series stock car racing, NC Speedway,
(910) 582-2161

Southern Spring Show
Feb. 24-March 4, Charlotte
Charlotte Merchandise Mart,
(800) 849-0248,
www.southernshows.com

Carolina Jazz Festival
Feb. 28-March 4, Chapel Hill
Celebrating Louis Armstrong, UNC Campus,
(919) 962-1449

"Peter Pan"
March 1, Mount Airy
Play, Andy Griffith Playhouse,
(800) 286-6193

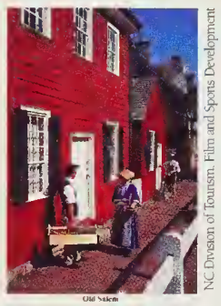
"Magic Moments" with The Drifters, The Platters, and The Coasters
March 3, Winston-Salem
Concert, The Stevens Center,
(336) 721-1945

"Ansel Adams, A Legacy"
Through March 18, Fayetteville
Exhibit at Museum of Art,
(910) 485-5121

"The Sodfather"
Through April 4, Raleigh
Exhibit honoring Jim Graham,
(919) 515-2273

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

"Is Seeing Believing? The Real, The Surreal, The Unreal in Contemporary Photography"
Through April 1, Raleigh
Exhibit, NC Museum of Art,
(919) 839-6262



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"Living with History: Views of Salem's Past"
Through April 6, Winston-Salem
The Gallery at Old Salem,
(888) 653-7253,
www.oldsalem.org

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

COAST
(East of I-95)

"As Long as the Waters Flow"
Feb. 1-11, Wilmington
Photography exhibit of contemporary Native American culture, St. John's Museum of Art, (910) 763-0281,
www.stjohnsmuseum.com

Family Science Saturday Series "Wild Weather"
Feb. 10, Wilmington
Cape Fear Museum,
(910) 341-4350

Gregg Gelb Jazz Ensemble
Feb. 10, Oriental
Concert, Pamlico Co. Civic & Cultural Center,
(252) 249-3079,
www.pamlicomusic.org

Antiques Show
Feb. 16-18, New Bern
Sudan Temple,
(252) 633-6448

Civil War Living History Program
Feb. 17-18, Winnabow
Brunswick Town/ Fort Anderson, (910) 371-6613

NC Herb Association Winter Conference 2001
Feb. 23-25, Greenville
(336) 570-6740

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

Family Day: Hurricanes and Heroes
Feb. 24, Beaufort
N.C. Maritime Museum,
(252) 728-7317

225th Anniversary of the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge
Feb. 24-25, Currie
Moores Creek National Battlefield, (910) 283-5591,
www.nps.gov/mocr

Deadline for April . . . . . Feb. 23
Deadline for May . . . . . March 23

A phone number must be included with event listings in order to be published.

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Raleigh, NC 27611
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e-mail:
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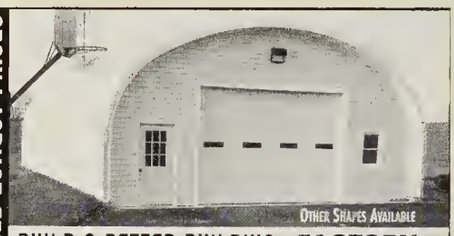

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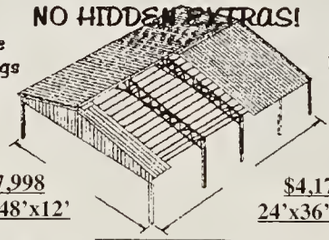

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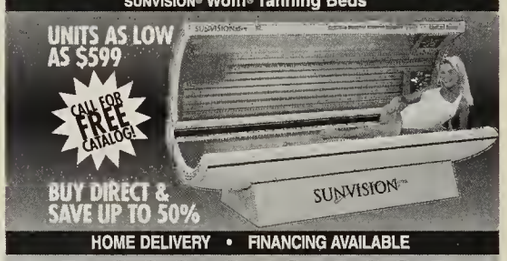

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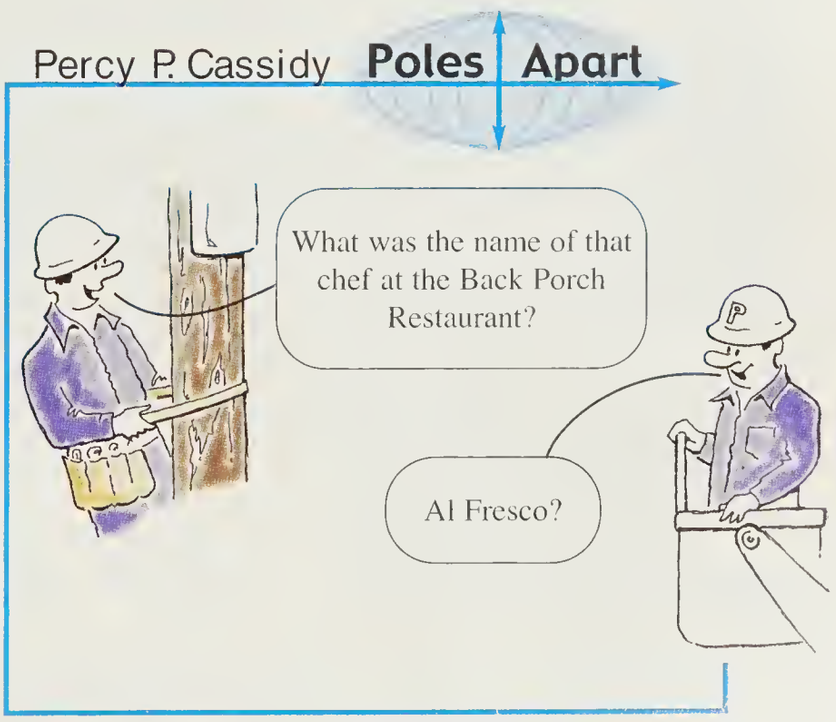

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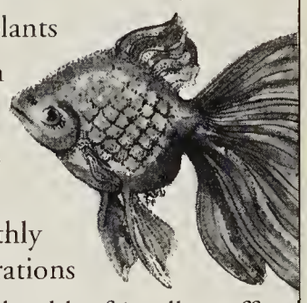

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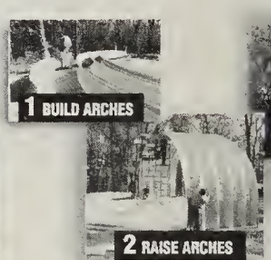

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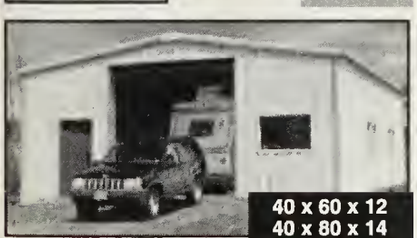

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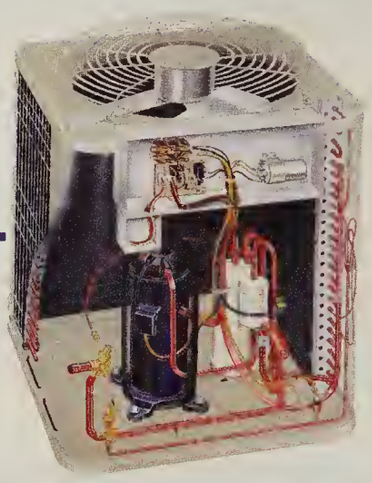
Energy savings could pay for a new heat pump



By James Dulley

If you have an old heat pump, you will be amazed at the improved comfort a new system will bring (both outdoor compressor and indoor blower units). I recently replaced an old heat pump in my home with an entirely new system that uses new ozone-friendly refrigerant instead of Freon.

Since a heat pump is used year-round, the utility bill savings often justify replacing your old unit, even if it is still running. Depending on the efficiency of your old heat pump, you may experience an annual savings as high as 50 percent on your electric heating and cooling bills.

The heating efficiency of a heat pump is called its Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) and the cooling efficiency is called Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER). The new models have HSPF's of about 8 and SEER's of 13. On the unit I installed, the contractor's computerized analysis showed that it will use about 41 percent less electricity than my old one.

You have many new efficient heat pump options to choose from depending on your comfort needs, your budget and your interest in the environment. Whatever type you select, make sure to have the indoor coil (the blower unit in your basement or utility room) matched to the outdoor compressor unit. Without it, efficiency will be sacrificed and it may not adequately dehumidify your house as it cools in the summer.

The newest models use R410A refrigerant instead of Freon, which attacks the ozone layer. These R410A compressors run at higher internal pressures, so heavy-duty compressor parts and coil materials are required. This improves overall reliability and reduces the noise level.

If your budget is not tight and you want the best comfort and absolute highest efficiency, select a two-level output heat pump. These models use one of two designs: 1) two separate compressors in the outdoor unit or 2) a single two-speed compressor motor. Both designs run on the low-output level the majority of the time.

By having a low-electricity-usage, low-output (heating or cooling) mode, the heat pump will not start and stop as often. This greatly improves the comfort, maintains steady room temperatures and is beneficial for allergy sufferers who need effective air cleaning. The entire unit, whether heating or cooling, operates super efficiently when it is in the low-output mode.

Another comfort and efficiency advantage of two-level models is the indoor variable-speed blower motor that they use. These special motors automatically fine-tune the airflow for the best comfort, efficiency and quiet operation. Most have a slow "ramp-up speed" start feature. This is quieter and reduces that initial blast of chilly air from the registers whenever the heat pump kicks on.

For budget concerns, most homeowners will probably install a single-level output heat pump model like I have. Most models use a simple scroll compressor with either Freon or new R410A. An optional variable-speed blower motor can also be used with these models for better comfort. With this optional motor, the efficiencies are usually about one point higher.

Using a variable-speed blower motor coupled with a special new temperature/humidity thermostat (called a thermidistat) allows you to adjust the humidity and temperature independently. The smart variable-speed blowers use only about 30 percent as much electricity as a standard blower motor. Over an entire year, this results in substantial electricity savings.

A thermidistat is particularly effective for savings in the summer because you can set your thermostat a degree or two higher without sacrificing comfort. For example, if your house is too humid, the thermidistat will select a blower speed for extra dehumidification with little cooling so the house is not overcooled.

The outdoor compressor unit on the new models is sometimes slightly larger than the old one (to accommodate the greater condenser coil area), but most should fit on the same concrete pad without modification. The new indoor blower units should be about the same size as your old one.

Write for (or instantly download from www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 824 - buyer's guide of the 14 most efficient, comfortable heat pumps listing output levels, efficiency, size, blower type, comfort features and a savings/payback chart. Please include $3.00 and a business-size SASE. Send it to James Dulley, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 54987, Cincinnati, OH 45254.

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Why Diet? Try Vinegar!

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By Joan Jenive

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by Hank Smith

Spring arrives in a few weeks. *Winter chores of planting, transplanting and pruning need to be completed soon. When planting or transplanting, dig holes large enough to accommodate the existing root system with extra allowance for new roots and root hairs to be formed when active growth begins. Apply water even if soil is damp. This insures close contact between roots and soil. Prune to remove any damaged or diseased limbs, branches or twigs. Delay pruning of spring-flowering plants until after they have produced blooms. Prune just above a joint or leaf-bud, making a slanted cut to insure that moisture from rain will drain away. If allowed to enter the cut wound, moisture can cause decay and an entry point for diseases. It's advisable to wait until spring to prune cold, damaged shrubs, since damaged stems and branches will do no further harm. Pruning now can cause tender buds to sprout – buds that can be killed by late freezes.*

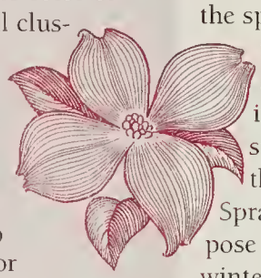
Bag a pineapple

Specimens of tropical pineapples can often be obtained as novelty plants at nurseries and garden centers, but with patience, a plant can be rooted from the discarded top growth of a fresh pineapple. After cutting away the leaf cluster, place on paper towels to dry. When dry, coat the base with Roottone and plant in rich potting soil. Water just enough to moisten the soil, and spread mulch over the soil surface. Provide full sun or partial shade. Applying liquid houseplant fertilizer every two weeks during growing season usually satisfies nutritional needs. With green-thumb luck, a plant will produce fruit in one to three years. Pineapples normally flower in response to day length. During long days, plants will grow vegetation; as days shorten, plants flower. When the rosette of lush foliage reaches about a foot in height, place the plant in a plastic bag with an apple. Close the bag and leave it about four days. Remove fruit from the bag, then feed and water the plant as usual. Within a few months, the plant should bloom and produce fruit at the tip of the leaf rosette.

Ask Hank

Q. We have a pink dogwood growing among native, white dogwoods. Will seedlings from the pink dogwood be true to color?
-- SMK, Haw River, NC

A. It's possible, but unlikely. Seedlings of flowering dogwood (Cornus florida) exhibit great variability – not only in growth rate, habit and amount of blooms, but also in the color of bracts, which surround the small cluster of blooms. This really is not a disadvantage. Without such variability, we wouldn't have the many fine dogwood selections that beautify our yards today.



Send your questions for Hank to Carolina.country@ncemcs.com or P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611.

Liriope for tight spots

Evergreen liriope is a near-ideal ground cover for sunny spots in the landscape. Once established, it's very drought and heat tolerant and needs little care. Liriope bears showy blue, purple or white flowers in the summer. Before planting, loosen soil to a depth of eight to ten inches. Work in a good amount of organic matter such as peat moss, compost or ground bark. Liriope like to grow in crowded, restricted spaces. The narrow strip of soil between a building and nearby walkway is a good place. After a few years of growth, liriope will develop crowded clumps. These should be dug up and divided, with enough divisions to establish new beds.

Japanese beetles vs. roses

Japanese beetles, a common pest of roses, as well as other plants, attack flower buds, full-blown flowers, and foliage. As many as thirty beetles can cluster on a single flower bud, often reducing a plant to its skeleton in short order. These metallic, greenish-bronze insects appear in early July for a period of about six weeks, and can ravish an entire countryside, feeding upon field crops, vegetables, and fruit and shade trees. Females deposit eggs in the soil, which hatch in several weeks, and begin feeding on vegetable matter in the soil as well as roots of plants. In cold weather, the grubs burrow into the soil at a depth of six to twelve inches and construct little earthen cells in which they pass the winter. During the spring, they work their way to the surface where they feed for several weeks before passing into the pupa stage. The pupa stage lasts about six weeks; then adult beetles emerge. Spraying foliage with an all-purpose spray is helpful. During late winter and early spring, spade grub-proofing insecticide around each rose bush.

Hort Shorts

Pyracantha

- Pyracantha can be trained into espaliers for dramatic accents against blank walls. Lead-headed mortar nails support branches, which are kept side pruned to create the design. Be sure to give pyracanthas alkaline soil.
- Fast-growing shade trees such as mimosa, thornless honey locust, silver maple, and Chinese elm are prone to insects and disease.
- When placing plants at the entrance of a driveway, select low growing plants that will not hide adults and children from approaching traffic.
- In the higher altitudes it's often advisable to wait for early spring warmth before setting out plants.
- February and early March are good times for severe pruning of broadleaf evergreens such as Burford hollies, Japanese hollies, cleyera, and pittosporum. Cut back as much as 12- to 18-inches from the ground and they will produce a lot of new growth in warm weather.
- Spend a cold winter evening mapping plans for the summer vegetable and flower gardens.
- Do not shear shrub specimens and shrubbery borders. Prune once or twice a year to natural shapes.
- Perennials such as yarrow, peony and dianthus are inexpensive compared to the blooms they offer in late spring.

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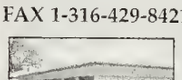

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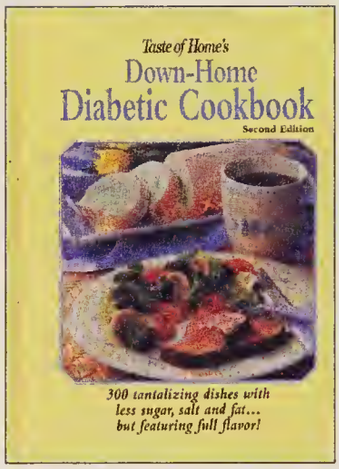
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Cucumber Dill Spread

Doris Heath, Bryson City, North Carolina

This creamy spread is so good on a hot summer day served with an assortment of fresh vegetables or reduced-fat crackers.

2 packages (8 ounces *each*) fat-free cream cheese, softened
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons minced onion
½ teaspoon dill weed
¼ teaspoon prepared horseradish
⅛ teaspoon hot pepper sauce
¾ cup finely diced seeded cucumber

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add lemon juice, onion, dill, horseradish and hot pepper sauce. Fold in cucumber. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour. Serve with fresh vegetables or crackers. Yield: 2⅓ cups.

Exchange: ½ Vegetable
Nutritional Information
Serving Size: 2 tablespoons. Calories: 25. Sodium: 139 mg. Cholesterol: 2 mg. Carbohydrate: 2 gm. Protein: 4 gm. Fat: trace. Fiber: trace.

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"Wall of China" Hedge

This handsome hedge is fast growing, hardy and beautiful. "Wall of China" withstands snow, ice, disease and sub-zero temperatures. Grows up to 3' the first year and gets thicker with every pruning. Excellent as a natural fence or windbreak. 12-18" plants. *N/A in CA and OR.*

Snowball Bush

Now you can have "snowballs" in your yard all season long! Snowball Bush bursts forth each spring with huge, snowball-shaped clusters of sparkling white flowers, each measuring up to 6" in diameter. Plant a single bush in your yard as a focal point or use several to create a floral hedge. 12-18". *N/A in AZ.*

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	16400	Hybrid Poplars 2 for $7.98	
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